

Message Text

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ACTION COA-01

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 INT-05 DOTE-00 OES-02 CG-00

COME-00 DODE-00 NSF-01 CIAE-00 INR-05 NSAE-00 RSC-01

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FM AMEMBASSY NASSAU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6148

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E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OCLR TPHY BF

SUBJ: R/V EASTWARD

REF: NASSAU 1851

SUMMARY: GCOB MINEXTAFF HAS FORMALLY WITHDRAWN PERMISSION FOR SUBJECT MARINE RESEARCH PROJECT. DUKE UNIVERSITY REPRESENTATIVE VISITED NASSAU NOVEMBER 6 IN ATTEMPT TO REVERSE GCOB POSITION, BUT MINEXTAFF PERMSEC RUSSELL SAID MATTER IS CLOSED AND, ON INSTRUCTIONS FROM MINISTER ADDERLEY, REJECTED EMBASSY SUGGESTION FOR MEETING WITH DUKE REPRESENTATIVE TO DISCUSS SITUATION. END SUMMARY.

1. RUSSELL ADDRESSED LETTER TO EMBASSY DATED NOVEMBER 5 CONFIRMING HIS ORAL WITHDRAWAL OF PERMISSION FOR BAHAMIAN LEG OF EASTWARD VOYAGE:

BEGIN TEXT I AM DIRECTED TO REFER TO (NOVEMBER 1 GRANT OF PERMISSION) AND TO INFORM YOU THAT WE HAVE NOW BEEN INFORMED THAT THE PORTION OF THE RESEARCH CRUISE RELATING TO BAHAMIAN TERRITORY HAS BEEN CANCELLED. IN VIEW OF THE ABOVE THE PERMISSIONS GRANTED IN MY LETTER UNDER REFERENCE HAVE THEREFORE BEEN WITHDRAWN.

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I SHOULD BE GRATEFUL IF YOU WOULD REQUEST THE STATE DEPART-

MENT TO WARN THE OPERATORS OF THE R/V EASTWARD THAT SHOULD THEY CONDUCT ANY RESEARCH IN BAHAMIAN TERRITORY OR CONDUCT CORING OR DREDGING ON THE CONTINENTAL SHELF OF THE BAHAMAS, AS ORIGINALLY PROPOSED IN YOUR LETTER OF THE 22 OCTOBER, 1974, THAT SUCH OPERATIONS WOULD BE CONSIDERED INCONSISTENT WITH THE INTEREST OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE BAHAMAS. (COMPLIMENTARY CLOSE). END TEXT.

2. ERIC NELSON, DUKE UNIVERSITY REPRESENTATIVE, ARRIVED UNEXPECTEDLY NOVEMBER 6 AND CALLED AT EMBASSY. HE SAID HE HAD BEEN SENT TO NASSAU TO SMOOTH THINGS OVER. BEFORE CONTACTING EMBASSY, HE HAD CALLED RUSSELL AND BEEN TOLD THAT AS FAR AS GCOB WAS CONCERNED THE MATTER WAS CLOSED, PERMISSION HAD BEEN WITHDRAWN, AND THERE WAS NOTHING FURTHER GCOB COULD DO.

3. NELSON REVIEWED DUKE'S VERSION OF SEQUENCE OF EVENTS AND DENIED THAT DUKE HAD IMPLIED THAT BAHAMIAN OBSERVER WOULD NOT BE WELCOME ON EASTWARD. NELSON, CLEARLY DISTRESSED BY EVENTS, SUGGESTED THAT SNAFU WAS DUE TO BUREAUCRATIC DELAYS AND POOR COMMUNICATION AMONG PARTIES INVOLVED. EMBASSY VIEW, AS EXPRESSED TO NELSON, WAS THAT WHILE DELAY WAS UNFORTUNATE, PROBLEM WAS ON COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN DUKE AND GCOB FISHERIES OFFICER BEALES AND THAT WHATEVER THEIR CONTENT, GCOB BELIEVED ITS INTERESTS HAD BEEN SLIGHTED. NELSON SAID HE WOULD LIKE TO ATTEMPT A MEETING WITH RUSSELL TO DISCUSS SITUATION. EMBASSY OFFERED TO CALL RUSSELL AND TRY TO ARRANGE SUCH A MEETING.

4. EMBASSY TELEPHONED RUSSELL, WHO REVIEWED CHRONOLOGY ONCE AGAIN AND EXPRESSED OPINION THAT DUKE WAS TALKING OUT OF BOTH SIDES OF ITS MOUTH. HE SAID HE SAW NO PARTICULAR PURPOSE TO A MEETING ON THIS PARTICULAR EASTWARD CRUISE, BUT WAS "ALWAYS WILLING TO TALK." EMBOFF REQUESTED TIME EARLY NOVEMBER 7 FOR MEETING AND RUSSELL WENT TO "CONSULT MY CALENDAR". HE RETURNED MOMENTS LATER AND SAID HE HAD MEANTIME DISCUSSED MATTER WITH MINISTER ADDERLEY WHO TOOK POSITION THAT "THERE IS NOTHING TO DISCUSS" AND MEETING SHOULD NOT TAKE PLACE. RUSSELL AND EMBOFF EXPRESSED MUTUAL REGRET.

5. NELSON, WHILE OBVIOUSLY CRESTFALLEN, SAID EASTWARD WOULD NOT UNDERTAKE ANY ACTIVITIES IN AREA WHICH MIGHT LEAD TO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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POSSIBILITY OF EMBARRASSING INCIDENTS. HE WILL CHECK WITH DUKE TO SEE WHETHER THE VOYAGE CAN BE RESTRUCTURED OUTSIDE OF THE AREA NOW DENIED DUKE OR CAN BE RE-SCHEDULED AT A LATER DATE, IN WHICH CASE A FRESH REQUEST FOR PERMISSION WOULD BE SUBMITTED TO DEPARTMENT.

6. PARTICULAR INCIDENT NOW APPEARS CLOSED. IN LATEST CONVERSATION WITH RUSSELL, HOWEVER, HE AGAIN ADDED COMPLAINT ABOUT

GENERAL ISSUE OF TIMELINESS OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH REQUESTS. RUSSELL, WHO THROUGH THE YEARS HAS HAD MANY CONTACTS WITH US MARINE RESEARCH FACILITIES, SAID THAT IN HIS OPINION SUCH FACILITIES AND USG DID NOT OBSERVE STANDARD LEAD-TIMES FOR REQUESTS USED ELSEWHERE IN WORLD, BUT ASSUMED REQUESTS TO GCOB COULD WAIT UNTIL LAST MINUTE BECAUSE BAHAMAS, AS YOUNG AND INEXPERIENCED NATION, " WOULD HAVE NO CHOICE" BUT TO GRANT PERMISSION NO MATTER HOW TARDY REQUEST WAS. RUSSELL SAID SUCH PRACTICE COULD NOT CONTINUE. EMBASSY REQUESTS THAT UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES REQUEST FOR SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH PERMISSION BE FORWARDED TO EMBASSY WITH LESS THAN A 60-DAY LEAD TIME. IF WE CAN BE PUNCTILIOUS IN THIS REGARD, EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT FUTURE REQUESTS WILL RECEIVE THE SYMPATHETIC RESPONSE WHICH HAS BEEN THE GCOB NORM.

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
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